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■ The next edition of  
*Greenkeeper International*  
should be with you by  
January 7.



**Have a  
Merry  
Christmas!**

# GREENKEEPER

*International*

**DECEMBER 1997**

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Ian McMillan and Steven Nixon, winners of 'The Toros' 1997

Photographic montage by Tim Moat

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# GREENKEEPER

*International*

is the official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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North Anston Trading Estate,  
North Anston, Sheffield S31 7NZ  
Tel: 01909 568533, fax: 01909 568206

**Greenkeeper International: winner of Certificate of Merit in Magazine of the Year category, Editing for Industry Awards 1994 and 1995**

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £34 per year, Europe and Eire £44. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN 0961-6977

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## Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

The Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, contact BIGGA on 01347 838581.

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# It's milk and carrot time once again

I don't know about you but I certainly believe that Christmas loses its appeal the older you get.

I have vivid recollections of Christmas time when I was a kid and certain things which always gave a warm glow inside. There was the funny little candle lighting ceremony which they did on Blue Peter for four shows before the big day - I never could work out how the candles could burn from one show to the next without ever going down; opening advent calendars when you always knew it was going to be a poorly drawn drum; visiting Santa down at the local department store and wondering why he had a Scottish accent; the School performance... No that's a lie, I have never taken a part in a Nativity play.

After what seemed like months it would be Christmas Eve and the ritual of laying out your sack - we also had stockings but they never appeared to be quite big enough for what we were hoping for - and a glass of milk and a carrot. We could never sleep and invariably roused the entire family from their beds at around 2am only to find that Santa hadn't been yet. I could have sworn mum and dad looked as disappointed and surprised as my brother and I.

When the old Man in Red had done his stuff it always seemed that the room was overflowing with presents. I still can't get over the size of the box my World Cup Subbuteo came in. I think I've still got it.

Nowadays Christmas is full of practical things, buying instead of receiving, planning instead of dreaming, and where once the month of December dragged on forever, now it has been scientifically proven by chronologists to last a mere 15 days - when everyone talks

about wondering where the time has gone in December, that's why!

So this year I've decided to try and bring a little of the juvenile magic back into Christmas and I've started by drawing up my Christmas List which, once completed, I'll send up the chimney. Does anyone still possess a coal fire?

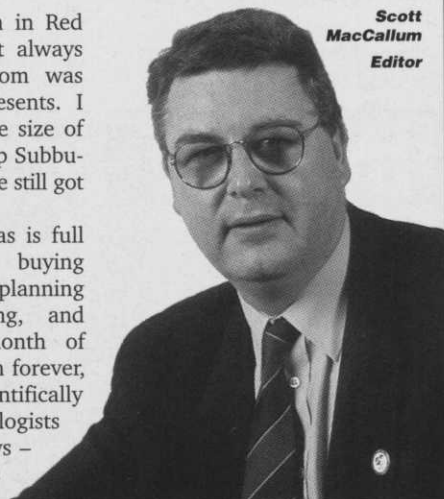
Dear Santa,

This year I've been extremely good, I haven't missed a deadline and as a result I feel I deserve:

- A new golf bag.
- A snowless BTME at which no-one mentions the great blizzard of '95.
- Pick of the rooms in BIGGA's new office and training building.
- A new picture of myself for this column.
- A selection of interesting pictures from Section events up and down the country.
- A National Tournament without rain.
- Fine weather whenever I visit a golf course on either business or pleasure.

The milk and the carrot will be on the mantelpiece and I hope you don't forget me.

If I don't get all that I want I hope that each of you do and have a superb Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Scott MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

A rare thing happened at the beginning of this month. I missed a BIGGA event!

It was the finals of the Toro Awards but they clashed with something at home and I just couldn't get away. However it would be hard to find a more able deputy than Gordon Child who stood in for me.

I was absolutely delighted that Steven Nixon from Past Chairman Barry Heaney's old club at Wortley near Sheffield won the Student Award and that Ian McMillan completed a wonderful double by winning the Excellence Award to sit beside the Environment Award Hankley Common had won the previous month. It was quite a remarkable achievement by Ian.

I soon made up for missing the Toros by attending Scotsturf in Edinburgh which was a great success - James and Jenny worked extremely hard and we even ran out of magazines on the stand. It was good to meet up with Elliott Small and his successor as Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, who seems to be settling in superbly and who masterminded our presence at Scotsturf. I also saw Past Chairmen John Crawford and George Malcolm as well as Scottish Vice Chairman Jimmy Nielson and Chairman Sam Morrison who is enjoying his new position at Bothwell Castle. I'm still jealous of that wonderful tartan blazer of your's, Sam.

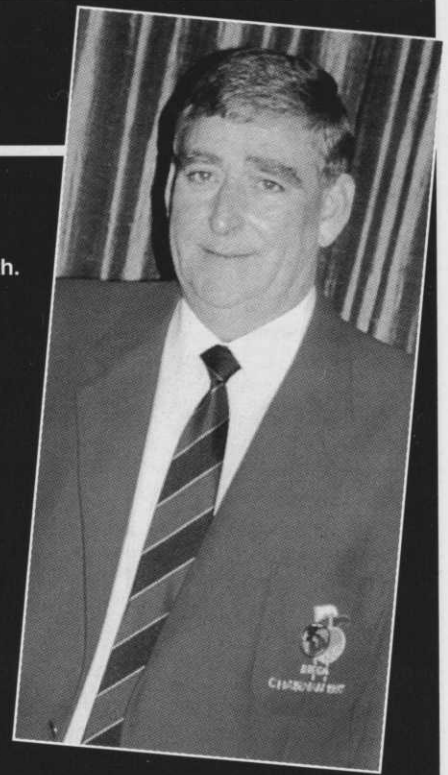
Scotsturf also gave me a chance to have dinner with Ritefeed to discuss the Ritefeed Championship which they are sponsoring as well as the Ritefeed Race Night at BTME from which all proceeds will go towards our Building Fund. I'm certainly looking forward to a long and enjoyable relationship with Ritefeed.

Back home I attended a Northern Regional Meeting at Mere. It was an extremely positive meeting at which Dave Goodridge the North Wales Chairman reported on events in the Principality. The only downside of the meeting was that Barry Heaney was unwell and unable to attend. Get well soon, Barry.

I was also lucky enough to visit Hankley Common to present the club with the BIGGA Golf Environment Award, in association with Amazone and Rhône Poulenc. Hankley were wonderful hosts and the golf course is a credit to the club and to Ian McMillan. The competition has been a tremendous success and the enthusiasm of all the winners who attended Hankley was simply wonderful.

Straight from Surrey it was on to Northamptonshire for an excellent Midland Seminar and can I just say how impressed I was with young Noel Greene, Student of the Year runner-up last year, who made his debut as a speaker and was excellent.

Well I'm just off to Spain for the FEGGA Conference but before I finish my packing can I just wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous and disease free new year.



# Environment winners score double success in major competitions

Having been announced winner of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity, last month Hankley Common Golf Club received its award at a function hosted by the Surrey Club this month.

The occasion was a personal triumph for Course Manager, Ian McMillan, for whom it was the conclusion of an amazing double, having been named winner of the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping only a short time earlier – see Pages 38-42.

The day was an opportunity for Hankley to be presented with its magnificent piece of glassware and show what it had done to achieve the award. Among the guests were representatives for three of the four Regional winners – Linlithgow GC, Temple GC, Burnham and Berrow GC. The only absentee being Royal Birkdale, who sent their apologies.

Unfortunately the weather was not kind and the planned course walk had to be abandoned but the excellent clubhouse facilities were ideal for the presentations and question and answer session which replaced the walk.

Club Captain, Mike Hunt, welcomed the assembled gathering and expressed his pride in what the golf club had achieved in Hankley Common's centenary year. He was followed by BIGGA's National Chairman, Pat Murphy, who said how delighted the Association was with the response to the competition and the enthusiasm of all

Disciples of Hankley Common may have been wracking their brains working out which hole provided the cover shot for last month's magazine. The fact is that it is the 18th... but in reverse. Unfortunately during the printing process the excellent Bob Taylor slide was flipped over and slipped through the various checks and balances which are in place. We would like to apologise to Course Manager, Ian McMillan, and the members and officials of Hankley Common Golf Club for any embarrassment caused by the error.



Top: Members of Hankley Common with Ian McMillan, winners of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, held in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity. Above, four of the winners with the sponsors

those who had taken part.

The two main judges, Bob Taylor from the STRI and Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist for English Nature, then gave talks on the rich seams of flora and fauna they had discovered on Britain's golf courses as well as the quality of conservation work which was being carried out.

Dr Duff explained that he was an extremely rare species – a nature conservationist who was also a golfer.

"Golf clubs should be applauded for doing so much on their courses. It is great for golf and great for the environment as well. I also applaud what BIGGA has done with this competition.

Following the judges Rod Baker, of Amazone Ground Care, whose had originally launched the competition in 1995 talked of his delight at how it had progressed over three years.

"If I had thought when I dreamt up this competition that by 1997 English Nature would be on board I would have been thrilled to bits... and I'm thrilled to bits," he said.

"I know Ian McMillan was dis-

appointed at being runner-up in the first year but they have come back and won this year and the club deserves it.

"We are committed to supporting this competition in '98 and committed to helping BIGGA in any way we can to make it grow."

Jonathan Hill, of Rhône Poulenc Amenity, said that he hoped the competition would continue to grow.

He then explained the rationale about a chemical company being involved in the competition.

"Careful use of our products goes hand in hand with conservation and protecting the environment. Pesticides can be plant medicine," he said.

Ian McMillan then gave a slide presentation showing the work that had been done at Hankley since his arrival and illustrated the extent of loss of heathland in the Surrey area.

Ian was presented with the crystal bowl and a cheque for £5000 to assist the club in its environmental endeavours.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ A new Internet site catering for everyone in the fine turf industry has been launched by Golfex.

The site has four main sections. 1. A Virtual Exhibition in which suppliers of products, services and educational courses have stands, each with a profile page, a page setting out products, services etc and an enquiry page for visitors to the site to send mail. 2. A Virtual Conference Hall in which it is possible to hold the on-line equivalent of a full-scale conference with papers, speakers, delegates. 3. A Library which will become a prime source of information for professionals and students. 4. A Catch-all area called the clubhouse which contains various rooms and notice boards.

Golfex will be on stand G18 at BTME to demonstrate the site and further information can be obtained from Charles Ollerenshaw. Tel: 01565 633667 e-mail: golfex@golfex.com

■ All STRI Training Courses are now BASIS approved and qualify for Continuing Professional Development Points (CPD) under the BASIS Professional Register. Fifteen points are available for both STRI five day residential courses – The General Turf Culture Course and the Turf Culture Course for Golf.

■ Ross Wilson, formerly Deputy at Newbury & Crookham Golf Club, has taken over as Course Manager at Donnington Grove Golf Club. He replaces Master Greenkeeper, David Winterton, who has moved to Maidenhead Golf Club.

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# Jacobsen's parent company set to buy Ransomes

Two of the biggest names in fine turf machinery will come under the same ownership if a recommendation to shareholders by the board of Ransomes plc to accept a bid of £137.1 million for the company from American giant Textron is accepted.

Textron already owns Jacobsen.

The sale, which is expected to be ratified by shareholders, comes at the end of an extended period of speculation regarding the Ransomes, Cushman, Ryan, during which time the rumour mill had linked them to a number of other companies.

Ransomes' Chief Executive Peter Wilson said that he didn't expect the sale to be completed until the end of the year at the earliest.

On the future of Ransomes he said it was early days but it was his understanding that the com-

pany would continue to operate alongside Jacobsen.

"Textron has stated that we shall become a part of a \$800 million group with others including Jacobsen and E-Z-GO," he explained, from Ransomes' Ipswich base.

On the matter of another well known British company being sold abroad he was a realist.

"There is more to a company than who is the owner and whether it is British or American but it is important to have the security of having someone who is a UK based supplier of the product.

"Up against huge companies which are well financed and extremely diverse it was thought better for Ransomes to join with a

bigger player rather than risk the economic vagaries of going it alone. We have to consider the shareholders and our employees," he explained

Mary Lovejoy, Textron's Vice President of Communications and Investor Relations, based in Providence, Rhode Island, said the acquisition of Ransomes would be a great addition to the Textron group of companies, which already includes Cessna aircraft and Bell helicopter companies as well as E-Z-GO, Iseki and Jacobsen.

"We feel that there are a great many products within the ranges of Jacobsen and Ransomes which are complementary. Ransomes offers a great deal in the commercial market, not just the fine turf

market, which will strengthen our position.

"The fact that Ransomes offers a manufacturing base which we do not currently have in the UK will give us much greater flexibility and we will be looking at the options that brings us. Importing product is extremely expensive," she explained.

She added that brand name was important to Textron and that the Ransomes name, which has a strong reputation and links with some prestigious venues including Gleneagles, St Andrews and Pebble Beach.

"Obviously as the deal has not been completed it is too early to speculate on how Ransomes' name would be incorporated into any new company title."

One of the great figures of British greenkeeping retires at the end of the year.

Bill Lawson, Course Manager at Heswall GC since 1965, and a former Chairman of EIGGA, Vice Chairman of BIGGA and latterly a Trustee of the Association, has been instrumental in the rise of greenkeeping to the stage that it is the respected profession it is today.

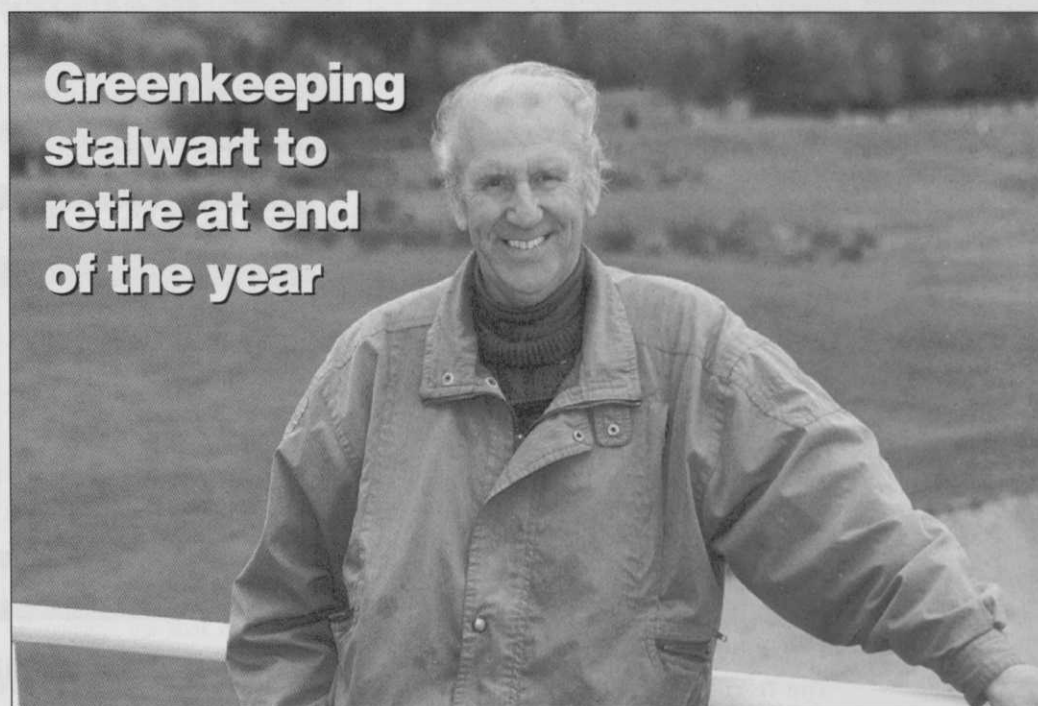
In the '70s and early '80s Bill was at the heart of discussions between Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers on how greenkeeper education should progress.

"The sound nature of those discussions backed by forward thinking golf clubs like Heswall have proved to be right," said Bill, who worked closely with Reaseheath College.

Bill is quick to pay tribute to his own golf club which has had only one Chairman of Green in the last 18 years: "It has been a privilege to work with Dr Frank Harkin who has been so forward thinking in working along with me in setting up the working and training programmes at Heswall. The emphasis is on working on five year programmes with Head Greenkeepers or Course Managers and Chairman of Green who will be there throughout."

A measure of that is the number of people who have moved on to top jobs from Heswall.

Among them, Raymond Hunt, from Forest of Arden; Marc Lewis, PGA European Tour; Kevin Roe, Pannal; Paul Pearce, Stockport; Norman Pearce, Lobenfeld Heidelberg; Ian Farrall, Cald; Nick



## Greenkeeping stalwart to retire at end of the year

Bower Hoylake; Neil Toner, Wirral Ladies, Reg Sommers, Head Groundsman at Liverpool FC and Guy Cannings, the new Course Manager at Heswall.

Bill sees a need for the educational standards to continue to improve. "The pressures are far higher today that you could ever have imagined 30 years ago. Then if you had a dozen cars in the car park it was a busy day. Now you can have 150 people playing by 10.30 in mid November.

"These pressures are here to stay and will only increase as golf continues to grow in popularity. This makes our work as profes-


sional greenkeepers more important than ever and makes BIGGA even more central to the future of every young greenkeeper."

He has enjoyed his time at a genuinely friendly golf club which offers up superb views into North Wales and out into the Irish Sea. He can look back at his work on the course which has included a general tightening up of fairways, the construction of new bunkers and a tree planting project which has involved the addition of 2,800 new trees.

Bill will spend more of his new found spare time on the riverbank indulging his passion for fishing.

■ Picture by Ian Birch.

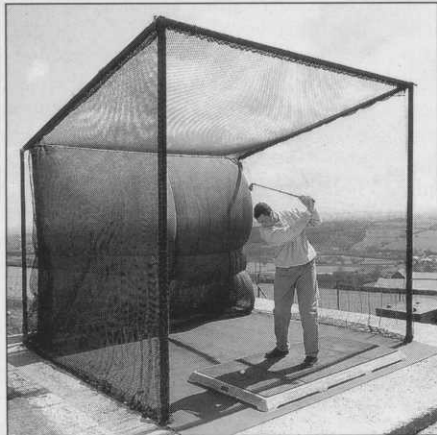
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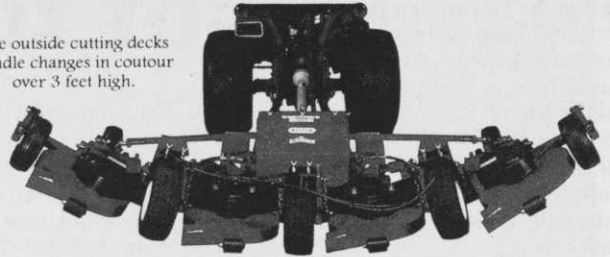
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# Eagerly awaited

**Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur B.Sc. (Agric.)**, with foreword by Michael Bonallack OBE, Secretary R&A.

*Practical Greenkeeping* by Jim Arthur is probably the most eagerly awaited book in its particular field published in recent years as it is the compilation of the thoughts, views and advice of one of the true doyens of agronomy.

Jim Arthur's career spans six decades and he has given guidance and advice to over 550 golf courses throughout the UK and Europe while acting as consultant agronomist to the Championship Committee of the R&A for 18 years.

Among those contributing chapters in their specialist fields are Donald Steel, on golf course architecture; plant pathologist Neil Baldwin; sport drainage expert Barry Cooper; constructor Brian Pierson; health and safety consultant Jon Allbutt and Jim's son, Richard Arthur, on soils and geology.

*Practical Greenkeeping* is published by The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and is available priced £29.95.

**A personal view of the book by Dr Bill Adams, Head of the Soil Science Unit at the University of Wales...**

It was a pleasure to read the 270 or so pages of this book because I believe it has provided Jim with the opportunity to draw together, in a more comprehensive manner than I have gathered from his articles, his experiences and opinions on golf greenkeeping.

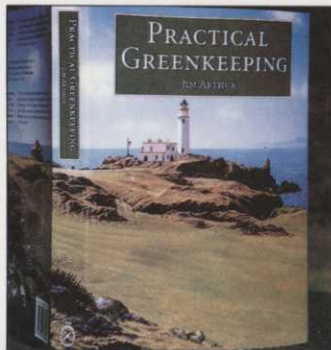
No-one has had such a long and influential experience as an advisor on turf culture for golf in the UK over a period of unprecedented expansion in participation in the game and the technology involved in its provision.

All who have a serious interest in golf turf need to read this book to appreciate the main features of advice which have influenced golf turf culture in the UK over the last half century.

There are 17 chapters. Apart from the first and last two, they deal with the various aspects of course construction and maintenance. So, for example, chapters deal with drainage, topdressing, mowing, irrigation, control of pests etc. The chapters are self contained and topics do not follow an obvious progression. Several chapters end with a series of conclusions but this style was not adopted throughout. Neil Baldwin contributed the chapter on turfgrass diseases.

An underlying theme is that golf should hold true to its traditions both in course design and turf culture. The first two chapters deal with the early development of the game and course design and both are interesting and informative. These chapters and the rest of the book include excellent photographs and illustrations.

Chapters dealing with turf maintenance practice contain indisputable good advice but one often feels preached at rather than agreeing with a conclusion on evidence



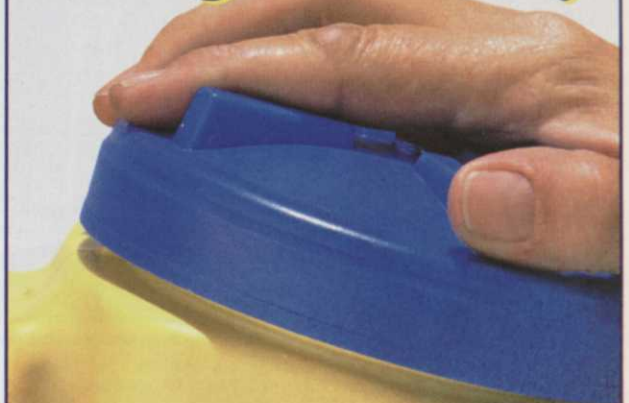
presented. This limits its value as a textbook because above all students, including young greenkeepers, need to reason "why" and not be satisfied with "what", "how" and "when".

The text contains only a small amount of quantitative technical data and there are few citations of literature to support statements of apparent fact. However, the style is consistent and conforms to Jim's philosophy that greenkeeping is "more of an art than a science".

A strong anti *Poa annua* theme is sustained and repeated fairly regularly throughout the book and a similar treatment is given to phosphatic fertilisers. The cultural control of annual meadowgrass has long been a key component of Jim's philosophy and advice but the extent to which greenkeepers can afford to impose the turf stress required is questionable in a context of ever increasing usage.

The penultimate chapter on conservation highlights a heritage golf courses have because of what they are and where they are. Not only do they occupy some of the wildest areas of coast but they are often the key green spaces among a sub-urban sprawl. The traditional design of courses supported throughout this book provides for variation based on natural features which relate to the local landscape and its vegetation. Long may the tradition continue.

## A new twist to a great story



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# Ritefeed Classic is born

The future of BIGGA's premier team golf event has been secured for at least the next three years with the signing of a generous new sponsorship agreement with Ritefeed.

The Ritefeed Classic will begin next year with members attempting to qualify for Regional finals via Section events with the grand final being played at a prestigious venue next September.

The Classic, which has been a popular competition under the guise of the Hayter Challenge for the last five years, has always been a superb opportunity for greenkeepers from up and down the country to meet, mingle and compete. Now thanks to a significant investment by Ritefeed over the next three years it is sure to enhance its reputation as an event not to be missed.

"We are delighted that the future of this hugely popular golf event has been secured and look



Doing the deal: BIGGA's Neil Thomas, left and Ritefeed's John Walker

forward to working closely with Ritefeed to ensure that it continues to offer wonderful opportunities for BIGGA members to meet each other and play on some

excellent golf courses," said BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

"I would like to play tribute to Hayter, who sponsored this event

for the last five years, and who have ensured that Ritefeed take over an extremely fine event," he added.

Under the direction of John Walker and Richard Lawrence Ritefeed became a Golden Key supporter of the Association earlier this year and with this latest sponsorship agreement they have reinforced their commitment to the Association and greenkeepers.

"The Ritefeed Classic complements our marketing strategy perfectly and illustrates how much importance we place on our relationship with greenkeepers. We look forward to strengthening that relationship through the Classic and meeting many more BIGGA members up and down the length and breadth of the country," said John Walker, Chairman of Ritefeed.

News on venues for the regional and the national finals will be released shortly.

## Best not to judge a course by its title

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND INTERVIEWING COURSE AT MANOR HOUSE HOTEL, MORETONHAMPTON NOV 3/4 1997

When I was asked to attend and introduce this course my initial thoughts were "that sounds a bit of a dry subject".

I could not have been more wrong! Frank Newberry is a very charismatic speaker who involves the delegates all the way through. I have done a lot of interviewing in my varied career and I did not think I was too bad at it! After attending Frank's course, however, I realise that there is a lot more to this than I have ever dreamed. It was a real education to sit with Frank and plan the interviewing strategy so that the whole interview was geared

to selecting the right candidate for the position offered. He demonstrated ways of exposing candidates weaknesses as well as highlighting their talents and really demonstrated that putting some thought and forward planning into preparing an interview really could produce constructive results.

It can cost hundreds of pounds to place advertisements in magazines and if these advertisements are not properly worded then many hours can be wasted in sifting through unsuitable applicants' replies and then subsequently even more hours and money wasted in unproductive interviewing when a proper selection formula has not been worked out

It was also great to watch the dele-

gates' confidence blossom over the two days. At the end of the course who had began as rather shy and diffident young men had become confident and personable and I felt were completely capable of very competently conducting a selection interview and of hiring the most suitable candidate.

These delegates, apart from benefiting from their fresh knowledge and increased confidence stayed, FULL BOARD, in a lovely top class Manor House hotel in a glorious setting.

Two days, one night's board, breakfast, a la carte dinner, 2 lunches in the dining room, morning coffee and afternoon tea with biscuits, unlimited soft drinks plus 2 full days tutoring - wow! - it must have cost a

fortune you must be thinking - won't send my staff on that! - Quite right too!

Because of the wonderful support of BIGGA's gold and silver key sponsors this experience cost the delegates exactly £75.

Why weren't more of you there?

Take my advice, when you see the courses advertised, if you are not sure of the content because the title sounds uninteresting, phone up HQ and ask them for more details and if any of the courses are presented by Mr Newberry, get on them as soon as you can. If you want to climb the ladder in your career, you cannot afford to miss this kind of opportunity.

■ Paula Humphries Regional Administrator (S. West & S. Wales Region)

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